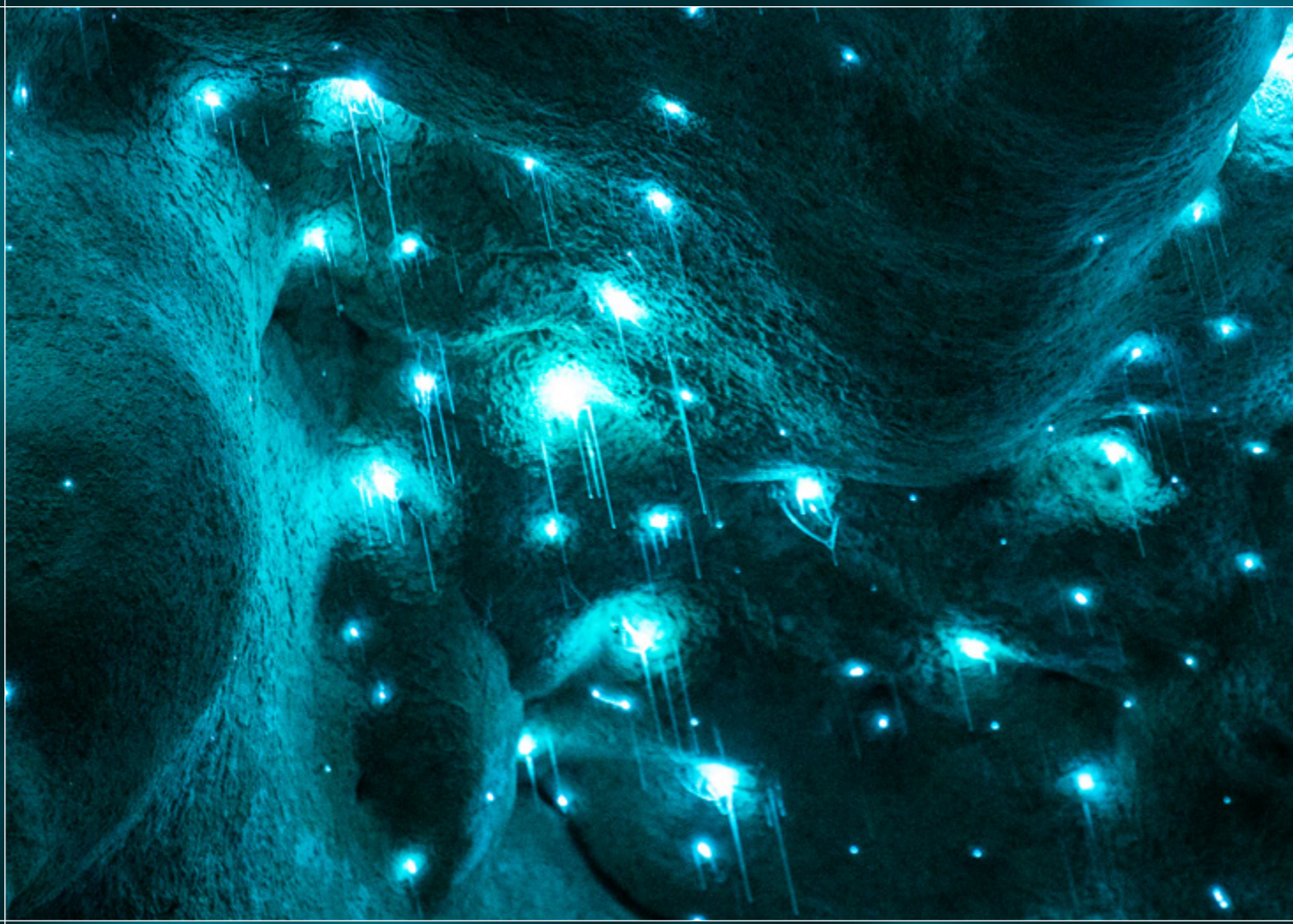
November 2026

Data Centres

APAC Regulatory Guide – **Singapore**

Investment considerations



MALLESONS

Chapter 10

Singapore



A year of... carefully managed expansion, sustainability-led approvals and continued regional leadership

Population
5.9
million

Data centres
74
YoY: 4 (5.7%)

Live capacity
1.14GW
YoY: 25MW (2.2%)

Pipeline capacity
552MW+
YoY: 175MW (46.5%)

Data centre statistics provided by DC Byte (as at September 2026)

Singapore is the leading data centre hub in Asia, a title it has held for some time. It offers a stable, well-regulated and highly connected environment with strong submarine cable infrastructure, 100% foreign ownership permitted and targeted tax incentives.

Singapore remains a preferred regional base for hyperscalers and enterprise operators serving Asia. The government supports cross-border data flows and aligns closely with international standards, reinforcing its position as a top-tier digital infrastructure market.

Singapore tightly controls new data centre developments, requiring strict energy and water efficiency standards. In 2023, 80MW was allocated to Equinix, GDS, Microsoft and the AirTrunk-ByteDance consortium. It allocated a further 200MW in 2026, shared equally between Digital Realty, Equinix, Keppel Data Centres and ST Telemedia Global Data Centres. Despite land and power constraints, major operators continue to see Singapore as a critical location to invest. The government has earmarked 20 hectares on Jurong Island for a 700MW green data centre park.

Opportunities

- Regional connectivity hub
- Political and regulatory stability
- Skilled workforce and strong capital pools

Challenges

- Controlled market access
- Power and land constraints
- High-cost base

Spotlight on key drivers

Limited entry, high standards

Following the lifting of Singapore's 2019 moratorium, the government introduced the Data Centre Call for Application (**DC-CFA**) scheme to regulate growth based on sustainability, strategic value and economic contribution.

The gap between the pilot DC-CFA1 in 2023 and DC-CFA2 created a supply constraint. While the DC-CFA scheme ensures only high-impact, efficient projects proceed, it also limits new market entry. Following the allocation of capacity under DC-CFA2 in August 2026, the Economic Development Board (**EDB**) and Infocomm Media Development Authority (**IMDA**) will continue to engage industry stakeholders and review the need for another CFA in 18 to 24 months, to support Singapore's strategic priorities.

Deal, or no deal? Sustainability as the decider

Singapore has made sustainability a strategic priority for data centres, requiring green certifications under its Green Data Centre Roadmap.

Operators must meet strict energy efficiency, decarbonisation, and water usage standards, aligned with national environmental goals. Certification under frameworks like the BCA-IMDA Green Mark for Data Centres (**GMDC**) is increasingly expected, and green energy procurement is becoming a competitive differentiator. Platinum certification, the highest tier, is a requirement for DC-CFA2.

Applications for DC-CFA2 were also required to meet sustainability requirements. While these requirements may raise upfront costs, they position operators to align with both regulatory expectations and the ESG priorities of global tenants and investors.

Power and land constraints

Despite Singapore's advanced infrastructure, data centre growth is constrained by limited land availability and tight power allocations.

These factors result in long lead times for approvals and grid connections - particularly for high-capacity facilities. Investors must plan for competition in securing resources and they are increasingly looking to Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand instead.

> Competition for the Singapore government's controlled releases of capacity is fierce, with a focus on projects that combine AI-ready infrastructure, exceptional connectivity and sustainable solutions. Singapore's advantage is no longer about scale. It is about building the highest-value digital infrastructure in the region.

Daryl Cox
Partner, Mallesons



01 Power

Getting power to a site

Singapore's electricity transmission and distribution networks are owned and operated by SP Group, a government-owned entity. SP Services Ltd, a subsidiary of SP Group, manages grid connections and customer services. Data centre operators can either:

- purchase electricity at wholesale prices from SP Group, the default supplier for large businesses, or
- contract with licensed retailers such as Geneco, Keppel Electric, PacificLight or Sembcorp Power.

Operators classified as contestable consumers (being those with an average monthly electricity consumption of at least 2,000kWh) may also register as Direct Market Consumers to buy power directly from the wholesale electricity market.

To secure a connection, applications must be made through a Licensed Electrical Worker (**LEW**). Estimated lead times are 26 months for a new 66kV connection to an existing substation, and 28 months where a new substation is required.

Data centre operators can buy electricity from...

SP GROUP

Default supplier for large businesses buying at regular tariff (non-contested)

RETAILERS LIKE

Geneco, Keppel Electric, Pacificlight, Sembcorp power buying at wholesale price

WHOLESALE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Register to buy directly as 'Direct Market Consumers' (contestable consumers with 2,000kWh average monthly power use)

Rationing in supply emergencies

The *Energy Transition Measures and Other Amendments Act 2024* empowers the Energy Market Authority (**EMA**) to ration power in the event of a supply emergency, underscoring the need for resilient and energy-efficient infrastructure.

Power purchase agreements

Singapore's electricity sector operates under a fully liberalised market framework regulated by the EMA. Power generation is privatised with different generators operating their own power plants. Electricity is sold to the Singapore Wholesale Electricity Market, where generators compete to supply power that can be bought by retailers or contestable customers.

The grid is owned and operated by an SP Group entity that oversees transmission and distribution.

The combination of the current licensing requirements and the lack of a wheeling regime make it difficult to structure physical corporate PPAs other than for onsite solar rooftop projects. For this reason, corporate PPAs tend to be entered into as corporate virtual PPAs.

Evolutions in Singapore's ability to procure green energy, notably through import from Malaysia, mean that data centre operators may be able to procure green electricity through a custom PPA with a retailer. They should expect this to come at a premium, although this may decrease as the new import projects (and the associated interconnections to other countries) are developed and commissioned.

Green Data Centre Roadmap

Sustainability guidelines are set out in the Green Data Centre Roadmap published by the IMDA. This covers key areas such as energy efficiency, renewable energy use and water efficiency.

In addition, Singapore promotes the adoption of the following sustainability standards:

- SS 546:2013 (Green Data Centres – Energy and Environmental Management Systems) which sets out best practices for energy and environmental efficiency
- SS 697:2023 (Deployment and Operation of Data Centre IT Equipment in Tropical Climates) which promotes energy savings through higher operating temperatures, and
- SS 715:2025 (Energy Efficiency of Data Centre IT Equipment) which aims to reduce IT equipment energy consumption by at least 30% and is now a compliance requirement under DC-CFA2.

Sustainability-led approach under the DC-CFA scheme

In 2022, Singapore lifted its 3 year moratorium on new data centre developments, adopting a selective, sustainability-led approach through the IMDA's Green Data Centre Roadmap.

New data centre projects must be approved under the DC-CFA scheme administered by IMDA and the EDB, as explored further above.

The DC-CFA evaluates proposals based on:

Sustainability
best-in-class resource efficiency and use of green energy

Strategic value
strengthening Singapore's role as a regional/ international connectivity hub

Economic impact
broader contributions to national economic objectives.

Under the DC-CFA2, applicants were expected to meet or exceed the following standards for their new facilities:

- BCA-IMDA GMDC 2024 Platinum certification
- attain a PUE of 1.25 at full IT load
- deploy equipment that exceeds the efficiency standards outlined in the Singapore Standard on Energy Efficiency of Data Centre IT Equipment (SS 715:2025), and
- at least 50% powered by eligible green energy pathways, such as:
  - biomethane
  - low-carbon ammonia
  - low-carbon hydrogen
  - novel fuel cells with carbon capture & storage technology, or
  - vertical building-integrated photovoltaics/building-applied photovoltaics.

See 'Land' below for further details.

02 Water

Water supply

Data centres in Singapore must secure water supply from the Public Utilities Board (**PUB**), the national water agency. Key considerations include:

- developers are required to submit water demand projections and may need to install private meters, or implement water recycling systems to meet efficiency targets
- water usage, especially for cooling, is closely monitored, and PUB may impose water efficiency benchmarks
- applications typically proceed alongside other utility clearances and can take 3 to 6 months, depending on project scale and complexity. Early engagement with PUB is recommended to ensure alignment with sustainability and infrastructure requirements.

Water efficiency and other requirements

The IMDA, in collaboration with PUB, aims to achieve a WUE of 2.0 m³/mWh or lower over the next decade.

Data centre consuming >60,000m3 water annually...

Must comply with mandatory water efficiency requirements, including:

- installation of private meters
- annual submission of water efficiency management plans to PUB.

Water discharged from cooling systems...

Classified as 'trade effluent' (*Sewerage and Drainage Act 1999*) and must meet standards set in *Trade Effluent Regulations*:

- PUB approval required prior to discharge
- trade effluent must not exceed prescribed limits for temperature, pH and pollutant concentrations.

03 Land

Securing land

Most industrial land in Singapore is held on a leasehold basis, with terms typically ranging from 60 to 99 years. Shorter leases of 30 or 60 years may apply in government-managed estates (such as those under JTC Corporation (**JTC**)). Lease terms and conditions are shaped by the timing of land release, zoning rules and the specific land-use scheme.

JTC oversees major industrial estates and business parks including Changi Business Park, Jurong Innovation District, Punggol Digital District and Tanjong Kling. Tanjong Kling serves as a dedicated data centre park.

In October 2025, EDB and JTC announced that approximately 20 hectares on Jurong Island have been reserved for Singapore's largest low-carbon data centre park, with the potential to accommodate up to 700MW of capacity.

Operators at Jurong Island will be able to leverage the island's ecosystem, including shared energy storage infrastructure and utilities, ample power capacity and emerging low-carbon energy sources.

Subletting without JTC's prior approval is not permitted. Unauthorised subletting has been an ongoing concern for JTC, with 400 confirmed cases reported in 2020. However, 'service providers' (which explicitly includes data centre services) are exempt if they have formal agreements with customers (for example, colocation customers) whose onsite presence supports the lessee's business.

Permits and approvals

All new data centre developments in Singapore must go through the DC-CFA scheme, administered by IMDA and the EDB.

The timing and availability of DC-CFA exercises are set by the government. The pilot round concluded in July 2023 and the second round launched on 1 December 2025.

Developers must secure general land development approvals such as planning permission and building plan approvals.

Timelines for securing permits, licences and approvals vary significantly and there is no standard timeframe. These depend heavily on project complexity, government processes, environmental assessments and the need for technical consultations, where the process can range from a few months to over a year.

What 'Green Certification' is available?

Developers can obtain the GMDC which certifies that operators have successfully deployed green data centre best practices, demonstrating superior sustainability and environmental performance in a data centre (see 'Power' above for further details).

The GMDC is awarded on a facility-by-facility basis and rates performance against key areas such as energy efficiency, sustainable design and construction, use of digital tools and maintainability. Under DC-CFA2, applicants must obtain Platinum certification, the highest tier.

Where can developers build data centres – and is rezoning possible?

Data centres in Singapore can be developed on land zoned 'Business 2 (Industrial)' and, in some cases, 'Business 1 (Industrial)' or 'Business Park'.

All developments require planning permission from the Urban Redevelopment Authority (**URA**), which assesses proposals with relevant technical agencies to ensure compliance with zoning, environmental, and infrastructure requirements. The URA's Master Plan is reviewed periodically and may result in zoning changes.

While there is no formal rezoning process specific to data centres, developers may apply for a change of use for existing properties to support rezoning requests.

04 Telecommunications

Is a telecommunications licence required?

A telecommunications licence is generally only required where a data centre provider:

- provides telecommunication services (for example, IP transit) to external customers, or tenants
- operates or owns infrastructure (such as fibre, switching equipment) used to deliver telecommunication services to third parties, or
- resells or provides telecom services over leased infrastructure.

Operators that only offer infrastructure hosting, such as colocation or private network support for customers, generally fall outside the licensing regime.

Data centres offering connectivity or network services may require licensing from the IMDA as Facilities-Based Operators or Services-Based Operators. Licensees must comply with specific licence conditions, such as quality-of-service standards, restrictions on establishing telecommunication links outside their premises and adherence to advisory guidelines.

Data centre operators that manufacture, import, sell, lease or offer for sale any telecommunications equipment in Singapore must obtain a Telecommunications Dealer's Licence under the *Telecommunications (Dealers) Regulations*.

05 Foreign investment restrictions

Singapore actively promotes foreign investment and generally permits 100% foreign ownership across most sectors, including data centres and cloud service providers.

There are no specific restrictions on foreign ownership in the sector. Importantly, foreigners and foreign-owned companies can lease industrial land (see 'Land' above for further details).

However, the government now has the authority to screen investments in entities deemed critical to national security, under the *Significant Investments Review Act 2024*. While no data centre operators have been designated to date, those with strategic or infrastructure significance could fall within scope, though the regime is expected to apply narrowly and on a case-by-case basis with low impact on most commercial data centre investments (see 'Power' above for further details).

06 Tax and other incentives

Special economic zones

Singapore does not operate designated special economic zones (**SEZs**). However, its pro-investment environment, strong infrastructure and policy stability continue to attract data centre investment.

A key regional development is the Johor-Singapore SEZ, formalised on 11 January 2025. Located in Johor, Malaysia, this bilateral initiative aims to deepen cross-border trade, investment, and digital integration (see 'Malaysia' chapter above for further details).

Tax incentives

Singapore offers a range of tax incentives to encourage data centre investment and sustainable operations, including those listed below.

- **Pioneer Certificate Incentive:** Provides corporate tax exemptions or reduced rates for 5 to 15 years on income from qualifying activities.

  Data centre operators may qualify if they introduce advanced technologies, skillsets or know-how that significantly exceeds prevailing industry standards in Singapore. Examples might include high-efficiency cooling systems, AI-enabled energy optimisation or cutting-edge security infrastructure.

- **Development and Expansion Incentive:** Offers a reduced corporate tax rate - as low as 5% or 10% - on income derived from manufacturing activities for companies expanding or upgrading business activities in Singapore.

  This is relevant for data centre operators building new data centres, upgrading facilities or scaling up regional operations.

- **Low corporate tax rate:** among the lowest in the region, enhancing its attractiveness as a regional data centre hub.

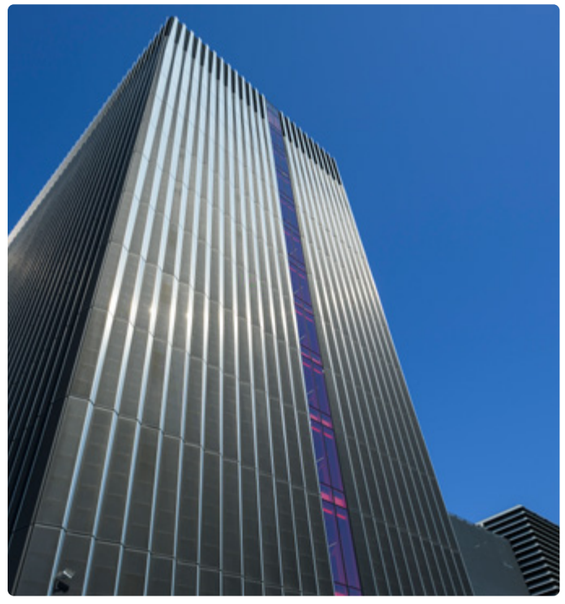
- **Green Incentives:** Companies investing in energy-efficient technologies or green-certified data centres between 31 March 2021 and 31 December 2026 may qualify for income tax deductions under various green investment schemes.

Other incentives

The EDB and National Environment Agency (**NEA**) offer several non-tax incentives to support energy-efficient and green data centre investments, including:

- **Investment Allowance for Emissions Reduction:** additional capital allowances for qualifying projects that reduce GHG
- **Energy Efficiency Grant:** co-funding support for energy-efficient equipment and retrofitting by the NEA, up to 70% support for pre-approved equipment, and
- **Resource Efficiency Grant for Emissions:** support for projects that improve energy and carbon efficiency in industrial operations, based on corresponding support rate for the carbon abatement achieved, capped at 50% of qualifying costs.

These schemes aim to lower the upfront cost of sustainable infrastructure and encourage long-term environmental performance.





07 Data protection and cyber security

Data protection or privacy laws

Data centre operators must comply with the *Personal Data Protection Act 2012* (**PDPA**) when handling or processing personal data on behalf of customers – bearing in mind that those requirements are more likely to be relevant to customers, rather than the operator. The PDPA includes:

- obligations to implement reasonable security measures to protect computer systems and prevent unauthorised access, and
- restrictions on cross-border transfers of personal data unless the receiving party ensures a comparable level of protection.

Cyber security laws

CII-classified data centres must comply with mandatory requirements under the *Cybersecurity Act 2018* (**Cyber Act**). This includes:

- implementing cyber security safeguards, conducting audits and risk assessments, reporting incidents and following codes of practice issued by the Commissioner of Cybersecurity (Commissioner), and
- operational resilience obligations, including establishing a cyber security governance framework, maintaining an up-to-date inventory of CII assets, implementing safeguards and developing incident response and recovery plans.

Resilience guidelines (set to become mandatory)

The Cyber Act is complemented by the IMDA's Advisory Guidelines for Resilience and Security of Data Centres and Advisory Guidelines for Resilience and Security of Cloud Services (**IMDA Guidelines**), which aim to strengthen data centre resilience and security.

The IMDA Guidelines recommend practices such as vulnerability testing, role-based access control and maintaining a robust business continuity management system.

The IMDA Guidelines are due to become mandatory under the *Digital Infrastructure Act* (**DIA**), which introduces a more comprehensive regulatory framework for data centre security and resilience in Singapore (see 'Critical infrastructure and security' below for further details).

While not mandatory, data centre owners are encouraged to adopt technical standards such as:

- the Multi-Tier Cloud Security framework
- TR 62 (cloud outage response), and
- SS ISO/IEC 21878:2019 (business continuity for cloud services).

08 Critical infrastructure and security

Critical infrastructure laws

In Singapore, data centres designated as CII by the Commissioner are subject to the Cyber Act.

CII owners must safeguard systems against cyber threats by sharing system and cyber security information with the Commissioner, complying with codes and directions, conducting audits and risk assessments, participating in exercises and reporting incidents.

The regime was broadened to reflect evolving digital threats (by the *Cybersecurity (Amendment) Act 2024*). This extended obligations to virtualised and third-party-owned CIIs, introducing Foundational Digital Infrastructure for critical services like cloud and data centres, and enabling the Commissioner to regulate entities supporting overseas essential services or digital supply chains.

Non-compliance with these CII obligations can result in significant penalties, including fines of up to S$500,000 or 10% of the entity's annual turnover in Singapore, whichever is higher.

Separately, the IMDA Guidelines outline best practices to mitigate risks from misconfiguration, cyber threats, and physical hazards. These measures include risk assessments, business impact analysis, business continuity planning and cyber security measures. While voluntary, these measures are due to become mandatory under the DIA.

This new legislation will establish a comprehensive framework for digital infrastructure resilience, going beyond cyber risk to address concerns such as supply chain vulnerabilities and service availability.

The DIA will apply to a wider range of infrastructure, excluding certain government, public authority, research, telco and utility facilities (see Digital Infrastructure Act below for further information).

Digital Infrastructure Act

The DIA establishes a more comprehensive framework to strengthen both digital infrastructure security and resilience (complementing the existing Cyber Act), and environmental sustainability. The DIA was passed by Parliament in October 2026.



The DIA introduces a dual licensing regime administered by IMDA, with licences for:

1. **Major data centres and CSPs:** covering broader operational risks with requirements including the implementation of security risk management measures, business continuity and disaster recovery plans. This will work in harmony with, and complement, the Cyber Act – provisions in any code of practice issued under the DIA that are inconsistent with the Cyber Act will not have effect (to the extent of the inconsistency).

   Applies to: data centres with a critical IT load of at least 10MW and regulated CSPs with at least SG$100 million revenue on average per year from Singapore-based users over the preceding 3 years.

2. **Data centres more broadly:** mandating energy efficiency requirements, including meeting specified PUE standards, with an allowance to introduce further requirements as needed (after industry consultation) including for water efficiency.

   Applies to: operators of data centres with a critical IT load of at least 3MW.

National security issues

Data centres designated as CII under the Cyber Act are required to comply with standards issued by the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (**CSA**). This includes implementing cyber security and physical protection measures, maintaining disaster recovery and business continuity plans, and reporting cyber security incidents. Operators must also adhere to codes of practice and may be subject to regular audits and risk assessments.

Physical security issues

The GMDC includes physical security and resilience requirements, such as fire suppression systems, CCTV coverage, humidity, electrical faults and lightning. It also addresses maintainability, including access for façade inspection and servicing.

Separately, under the *Infrastructure Protection Act 2017*, data centres located within or near sensitive or high-security sites (such as government facilities) may be subject to additional physical protection requirements, including security-by-design features integrated into building plans.

Financial institutions

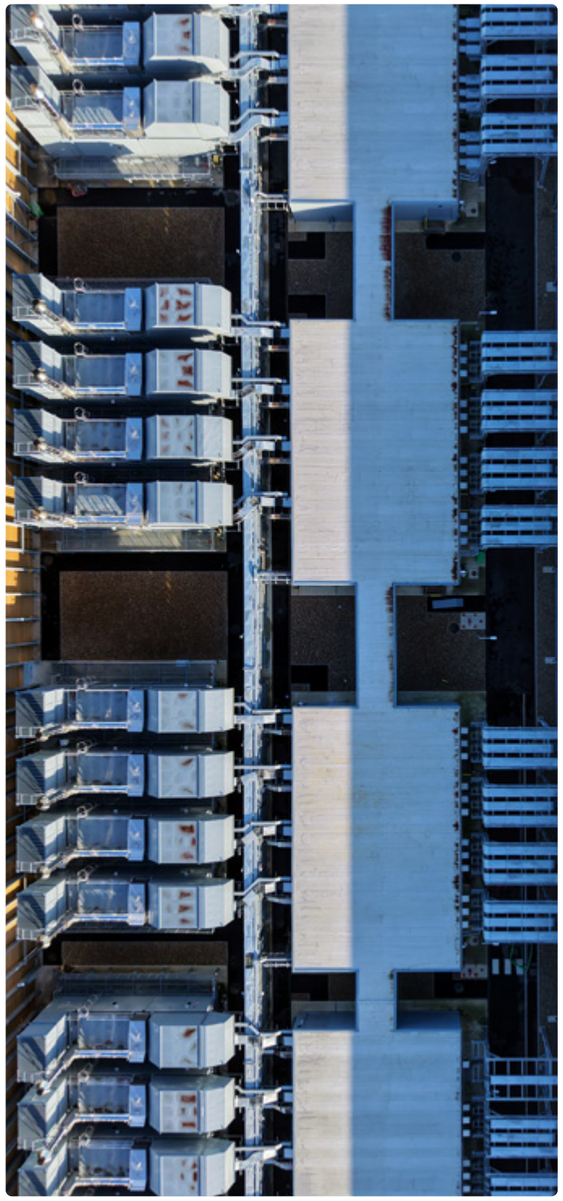
Engaging data centre services may subject financial institutions to obligations under the Monetary Authority of Singapore's (**MAS**) Guidelines on Outsourcing, including risk management and audit rights.

The MAS Technology Risk Guidelines further advise financial institutions to conduct threat and vulnerability assessments of their data centre arrangements. These guidelines highlight considerations such as physical access controls, diversified data communication paths and redundant cooling infrastructure to ensure operational resilience and data security.

09 Data localisation

Singapore does not impose general data localisation requirements. Data can be transferred and stored outside of Singapore, as long as the transfer complies with the PDPA.

In addition, the EU-Singapore Digital Trade Agreement (**EUSDTA**) entered into force on 1 February 2026 further solidifies this position, by prohibiting parties from requiring companies to store, process or transmit data using local computing facilities, or from requiring data to be stored domestically (subject to limited, justified exceptions).



10 Environmental, social and governance

International ESG commitments

Singapore is a signatory to key international climate agreements, having ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016, the UNFCCC in 1997 and the Kyoto Protocol (including its second commitment period) in 2021.

In February 2025, Singapore published its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (**NDC**), setting an economy-wide target to reduce emissions to 45–50 $MtCO_2e$ by 2035. However, its NDC commitments have not been codified into domestic law.

Carbon tax on big emitters

Singapore imposes a carbon tax on facilities that emit 25,000 tonnes or more of CO_2e annually. The carbon tax has progressively increased, from:

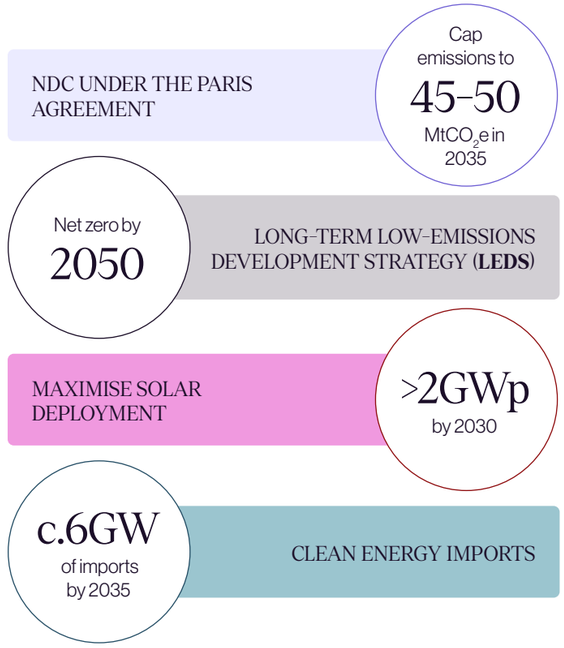
- S$5 per tonne of CO_2e initially for 2019 to 2023
- S$25 per tonne from 2024 to 2025
- further planned increases to S$45 per tonne in 2026 and 2027, and
- reaching S$50 to S$80 per tonne by 2030.

ESG reporting

All listed companies in Singapore must file annual climate-related disclosures with the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority and the Singapore Exchange regulator.

This is the first milestone in Singapore's Climate Reporting and Assurance Roadmap, aimed at boosting the city-state's global business hub status.

Mandatory reports are required for all listed issuers from financial years starting on or after 1 January 2025. This requirement will also apply to large non-listed companies - defined as those with annual revenue ≥ S$1 billion and total assets ≥ S$500 million (unless an exception applies) - for financial years starting on or after 1 January 2027.



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Our independence gives us the flexibility to combine our top tier full-service capability with the best advisers in every market.

We have 200 partners and over 1,500 lawyers who are locally qualified and globally experienced.

We're here to be the firm clients and communities trust most with their future in a world that never stands still. To have an outsized impact. To lead the market. To make a difference to be proud of. To create careers that can go everywhere.

Click here to access our full Data Centre APAC Regulatory Guide covering all 14 markets and exploring key themes across the region.

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